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ABSTRACT

This paper looks at the literature on library bibliographic instruction and reviews the state of the art of such instruction in college and university settings. It is divided into four sections which include: (1) abstracts of 14 representative articles on library instruction published within the last 5 years; (2) a summary of major trends, problems, and concerns addressed in this area of the library literature; (3) information on library instruction as it is actually practiced in a medium-sized, state-supported college and a small privately-supported university, both in upstate New York; and (4) an assessment of the major areas of agreement and disagreement between the library literature and the college and university librarians interviewed during the study. A striking level of agreement between the literature and actual practice was found. (Author/ESR)

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BIBLIOGRAPHICAL INSTRUCTION:

WHERE IT'S AT

AND

WHERE IT'S GOING

by

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INTRODUCTION

This paper, originally undertaken as a term project for a graduate reference course in the School of Information and Library Science at the State University of New York at Buffalo and since considerably expanded and revised, is a state-of-the-art study in bibliographical instruction in the college and university setting. It is divided into four sections. The first section abstracts fourteen of the best and most representative articles on library instruction as gleaned from the library literature of the last five years. The second section attempts to summarize or to crystallize the major trends, problems and concerns in bibliographical instruction that this current literature is addressing.

The third section turns from the literature to the state-of-the-art of library instruction as actually practiced in two representative academic institutions in upstate New York, one a medium-sized, state-supported college and the other, a small, privately supported university. The fourth and final section offers an assessment of the major areas of agreement and disagreement between the library literature and those librarians I interviewed who are actively engaged in the trenches with library instruction. I hope that the theory presented in the first two sections provides some perspective on the practice presented in the third section and, conversely, that the practice provides a corrective balance and counterweight to the theory.

I should add that this project could not have been completed without the invaluable aid and encouragement of many people. In particular, I would like to thank Mr. D.J. Karre, Assistant Director of the Niagara Falls (New York) Public Library, for whom I initially embarked upon this project,

Ms. Gemma DeVinney, who gave generously of her time and expertise in the field of bibliographical instruction, and Ms. Barbara Salit, who provided much helpful criticism.

Bruce McNallie
August 30, 1982

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ABSTRACTS

Tucker, John Mark. "User Education in Academic Libraries: A Century in Retrospect." Library Trends 29 (Summer 1980): 9-27.

John Mark Tucker, Reference Librarian and Assistant Professor of Library Science at Purdue University, traces the history of library instruction. He credits Ralph Waldo Emerson with the initial concept of library instruction in his statement urging colleges to appoint "a professor of books." But it was the academic revolution of 1870-1910, which fostered the ideals of vocational training, research, and liberal education, that saw the first significant emergence of bibliographical instruction. By 1876, Otis Hall Robinson of the University of Rochester could refer to librarians as educators rather than keepers of books. And Melvil Dewey wrote shortly thereafter that "the library is a school and the librarian is in the highest sense a teacher." The full extent of the acceptance of library instruction by the turn of the century is attested to by a 1912 survey of the U.S. Bureau of Education. Of 149 institutions out of 200 responding, 57 percent offered required or elective courses, and 86 percent of the respondents had classes designed to aid students develop skills in the use of reference works and in the exploitation of library resources in general.

During the 1930's, Harvie Branscomb's Teaching With Books formulated the crucial concept that the problems of library use were the common responsibility of the entire academic community. Moreover, he addressed his ideas not only to professors and librarians but to college presidents and administrators and ushered in the current practices of testing student knowledge, offering courses taught by librarians, and providing course-related instruction planned in consultation with faculty members.

The years immediately following World War II saw the technical and practical advance of library instruction with more conspicuous use of audiovisual materials and equipment. However, it was the 1960's and 1970's that saw the greatest impetus and growth in library instruction. Subsequent to the launching of the Soviet satellite Sputnik in October of 1957, federal generosity in the funding of higher education expanded. Supported largely by the Ford Foundation, the Council on Library Resources (CLR) made grants to academic libraries, and, in 1969, in conjunction with the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), CLR initiated the College Library Program, which sought the improvement of undergraduate education through the support of experimental library programs aimed at making the academic library aware of its functioning as "a full partner in the education of the student."

Wilson, Pauline. "Librarians as Teachers: The Study of an Organization Fiction." Library Quarterly 49 (April 1979): 146-162.

In this article, Pauline Wilson offers the dissenting view that librarians are not teachers. She argues that academic librarians in particular have subscribed to the "librarian as teacher" fiction for three reasons: 1 - To overcome the unflattering stereotype of the librarian as prissy, passive, and conservative, 2 - To attempt to gain a higher status for himself, 3 - To try to explain himself and his specialized work to other professions and the public in terms that they can more readily comprehend.

Wilson contends that while a teacher's role and a librarian's role often intersect or overlap, a teacher is primarily concerned with the dissemination of the content of the graphic record. On the other hand, the librarian's primary concern is with the graphic record as a structure, with the identifying, locating, acquiring, and disseminating of this graphic record. She maintains that a librarian only teaches when teaching is the best or perhaps only method to provide the user effective and efficient access to the graphic record and constitutes only a small part of his myriad professional responsibilities. And even here, much of the teaching previously done by librarians is being supplanted by instructional technology such as audiotapes, sound filmstrips, and sound slides, which in many cases are preferred by users and learners.

Wilson concludes by arguing that the "librarian as teacher" fiction, far from being a harmless ego booster, will lead over the long haul to personal uncertainty and self-doubt about one's professional identity as a librarian and to dissension in the library profession itself as exemplified by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) decision in 1978 to hold its annual convention separate from that of the ALA.

Fjällbrant, Nancy. "Teaching Methods for the Education of the Library User." Libri 26 (December 1976): 252-267.

Fjällbrant examines the following methods of bibliographical instruction, pointing out their advantages and disadvantages:

1. The lecture: Used for teaching large groups of students and employing visual input (via the blackboard or overhead projector), it has the great disadvantage that the receiver cannot control the speed of delivery of the information nor the reinforcement value of repetition unless printed handouts are provided. It is particularly ineffective in initial student orientation when a student is struggling to adjust to university life and is not yet motivated to understand the library. Another disadvantage is in conveying information about bibliographic aids, the "catalogue aria" syndrome. The advantage is as a stimulus and a means of conveying enthusiasm about the subject.
2. Seminars, tutorials, demonstrations: Seminars and tutorials with fewer students provide opportunities for asking questions and clarifying difficult points. For explaining use of specific reference tools, demonstrations are necessary.
3. The guided tour: Sometimes called the "herded" tour, this is generally ineffective, students merely following the librarian passively around the various stations. It is also demanding on staff time and with multiple section courses, the librarian can't always remember what he has said to each group.
4. Audio-visual methods: Tape/slide presentations, particularly when augmented by color for easier identification of actual publications, is effective. A Swedish College of Librarianship, Borås, evaluation test on the use of the tape/slide "Guide to Abstracting and Indexing Services" showed 80% of the 180 students responding favorably to its usefulness. Chief advantages are its flexibility (It can be used for group or individual teaching), its constant availability without the need for a librarian's presence, its relatively low production cost.
5. The book/printed guide: Its chief advantages are its availability for use when required and its allowing of students to work at their own speed. However, avoidance of library jargon and timing of distribution are crucial. During student orientation week, students have too many handouts to cope with.

6. Programmed instruction: Done by book, automatic slide projection or computer-aided instruction (CIA), P.I. permits students to work at their own pace, to participate directly in the learning process and chart their own progress. Little or no interaction with peers or a lecturer can be an advantage for the introvert but a disadvantage for the extrovert who enjoys the give-and-take and competition of the classroom. It may work best when combined with practical exercises.
7. Self-instructional material: Such material includes audio-taped commentary, visual signs, color coding, and self-guided tours along a visual indication line. These can be helpful only if the visuals are clear and attractive.
8. Individual instruction at the reference desk: This has the advantage of one-on-one instruction when the student is motivated to learn a particular point. But the disadvantage is that the librarian can't give his individual attention to the student if the phone is ringing or if a line is queued up at the reference desk. Also, it provides immediate relief without necessarily providing the student with the understanding to cope with the same or similar situations in the future.

Renford, Beverly L. "A Self-Paced Workbook Program for Beginning College Students." The Journal of Academic Librarianship 4 (September 1978): 200-203.

Renford, a Reference Librarian at the Pennsylvania State University Libraries, regards the self-paced workbook as perhaps not the best way to instruct students in library skills but as being particularly effective at large universities like her own which has to reach 4,300 freshmen a year, where the students have broadly varying skills and background in use of the library, where the largeness and complexity of the university library poses special difficulties for the student, and where English instructors have no time for even one or two periods of library instruction because of the recent increase in class time spent on remedial reading and writing. It also is less costly in personnel, time, and capital than other methods of instruction. Penn State's experiment found that administration of the program absorbed about 40 to 50 per cent of one librarian's day if the librarian has the part-time assistance of a clerk-typist. The clerk-typist handles text preparation, correspondence, filing, recording of class grades, and similar projects. Additional time can be saved if answer sheets in the workbooks are multiple-choice and true and false and are machine-readable by a template or an optical scanning machine. During peak weeks for completing the workbook, service areas that closely interact with students (maps and microforms) may have to add an extra staff member, and there is the cost for printing the workbook. But most printers will provide estimates and suggest the least expensive production method. To assure maximum help to the student, the workbook should cover the following areas: 1 - Acquaint students with the physical layout of the library, 2 - introduce students to basic library materials for beginning research, 3 - acquaint students with the physical location of reference tools mentioned in the workbook, 4 - acquaint students with various forms of library materials.

Olvenik, Peter, P. "Non-Formalized Point-of-Use Library Instruction: A Survey." Catholic Library World 50 (December 1978): 218-220.

This article is a report of a survey conducted to determine the current state of non-Formalized Point-of-Use Library Instruction in 133 U.S. and Canadian academic libraries. Through the auspices of LOEX (Library Orientation-Instruction Exchange), a three page questionnaire was sent out to 279 academic institutions (universities, colleges, and community colleges) of which 133 (48%) responded. In the survey, "point-of-use instruction" was defined "as any presentation that informs the patron about the use of a particular reference/research tool and is found at the location of that tool". Some of the pertinent findings of the survey were:

1. The preferred or most often used format was the printed handout, followed by the chart and poster. Media-assisted presentations were fewer in number with slide/tape edging out audio-tape in the media area.
2. The most popular topic for presentation was the card catalog which scored 50% higher than its closest rival, "Periodical Abstracts and Indexes."
3. 62% of the respondents believed that point-of-use instruction really works, but only 54% had employed any evaluation of their programs.
4. Results were not completely conclusive on the effectiveness of point-of-use instruction as a time-saver for the reference librarian. 38% felt that it did free librarians to do other things, 18% thought that it did not, 23% had doubts that it saved time and 12% felt that it might save time under certain conditions.

Olevnik sums up the chief results of the report as showing point-of-use instruction as an aid to the reference librarian but not a substitute for him. If media-assisted programs did not exceed ten minutes and if the program, whether media-assisted or in print form, was clear, free of jargon and understandable by Freshmen students it would: 1 - reduce repetitive explanation by the reference librarian of the use of basic reference tools, 2 - provide instruction at the time and place of need, 3 - provide instruction when a librarian was not available for assistance. But many questions remain unanswered about program effectiveness through the lack of systematic evaluation procedures. These need to be developed since point-of-use could grow in popularity in a period of belt-tightening when staff is cut back and funds severely reduced.

O'Donnell, Michael. "Library Instruction During a Period of Retrenchment." Bookmark 38 (Fall 1979): 231-236.

The author, an Assistant Professor and Head of Serials at the College of Staten Island, sketches an interesting clash of opinions about the value of library instruction between the librarians on one of the school's two campuses and those on the other. Those on the Sunnyside Campus (formerly Staten Island Community College) endorse library orientation tours as a means of reawakening dormant library skills in middle-aged housewives and military veterans who have been away from school and in opening a new world to disadvantaged ghetto students who have never seen the inside of a library. They also support a two-credit course in library instruction entitled "Access to Information", the purpose of which is to prepare the student for writing a research paper. And they are equally fervent about course-related bibliographic instruction because it reaches the student in a specific discipline at the time when he needs the information and because it keeps the librarian on his toes in familiarizing himself with the reference works in the collection for all disciplines.

On the other hand, the librarians at the St. George campus, working in a library of 120,000 volumes as opposed to Sunnyside's 40,000 volume holdings and serving an upperclass and more intellectually advantaged student clientele, are more traditionally oriented towards collection building and management. They are less well-staffed as well. They contend that the chief effect of orientation tours is to show the less desirable elements a neat place to "hang out" and to give faculty members a day off with a librarian baby-sitter. They see credit-bearing courses as a strain on the time and energies of an already overworked staff, and as particularly unjustifiable since the courses have never reached more than twenty students a semester. They do see value in course-related instruction but not at the lower division level where they believe basic reading, writing, and study skills should be focused upon. They believe students must learn to walk before they can run to the library.

O'Donnell concludes by drawing some object lessons: 1 - In a time of declining enrollment and fiscal difficulties, do not overextend your library instruction program, 2 - All the professional staff, not just the teaching librarians, should participate in developing a program of library instruction, 3 - Avoid the "good guy" versus "bad guy" syndrome. Everyone has a part of the truth. No one has the whole truth. The truth at Staten Island evidently lies half-way between "go teach ye all nations" and "bolt the damn doors."

Andrews, Phyllis. "A University Approach to Bibliographic Instruction."
The Bookmark 38 (Fall 1979): 219-224.

The Chairman of the Bibliographic Instruction Committee of the Library of the University of Rochester, Phyllis Andrews discusses how the University of Rochester built its bibliographical program in a period of financial austerity and what new directions she envisions "b.i." as taking at Rochester in the 1980's. Rochester has built a successful program since 1976 primarily because: 1 - The program was planned by a committee of in-house bibliographers without the expense of hiring new staff to set up the program, 2 - Needs assessment interviews were carefully planned with faculty and students to pinpoint areas of greatest need, 3 - The program was developed gradually, and librarians were encouraged to select instruction situations carefully so as not to spread their time and energies too thin, 4 - The committee members saved money by training selected staff members in instruction who in turn trained others on the staff.

For the 1980's, Andrews sees library instruction putting increasing emphasis on: 1 - methods for identifying and locating holdings in other collections through special bibliographies and finding guides in the local library as well as through interlibrary loan services and local contacts with network or cooperating libraries, 2 - instruction in access tools other than the card catalog for retrieving various categories of materials such as microform series, unanalyzed materials (e.g., short story and play collections) and government documents, 3 - the designing of access to library materials in such a way that their use will be more readily apparent and will require less special instruction.

Roberts, Anne. "How to Generate User Interest in Library Orientation and Instruction: Some Practical Suggestions." Bookmark 38 (Fall 1979): 228-230.

Roberts lists the negative aspects of bibliographical instruction: 1 - more work for the librarian as users begin to ask more sophisticated reference questions, 2 - a heavier demand for interlibrary loan for the retrieval of elusive titles. However, she sees the following advantages as outweighing these negative factors: 1 - the psychological satisfaction for the reference librarian in seeing users develop library skills, 2 - good public relations as users' recognition of the value of the library and the librarians increases, 3 - a concomitant recognition by the institution's administrators with resultant professional rewards, such as salary increases.

While strongly endorsing bibliographical instruction, Roberts believes that a b.i. program must be carefully planned if it is to be successful. She offers the following suggestions: 1 - start small and know your users' needs. If they will have no need for the Modern Language Bibliography, don't start there but with Index Medicus and American Men and Women of Science. 2 - Promote interest through varied approaches such as a library open-house day with refreshments, integration of the library program into the opening week general orientation program for students, cultivation of professorial goodwill through lobby displays of professors' publications and scholarly accomplishments, 3 - Time the instruction for when the user needs it since studies show that this is the most effective instruction, 4 - Don't try to teach too much at once. If patrons are overwhelmed, they aren't likely to return. A three-step program could mitigate overload. The first step could be a welcome and physical orientation to the library, a second step a demonstration of how to use several basic tools and a third step an actual working session in the library when users would follow a search strategy approach on their own subject. 5 - Constantly assess the program, examining it in terms of changing user needs and in terms of your own time and energy. 6 - Keep statistical records so you can prove the value of the program to administrators increasingly concerned with cost effectiveness.

Byrne, Frederick.. "Undergraduate Library Instruction at Columbia."
Bookmark 38 (Fall 1979): 253-256.

A librarian in the Instructional Library at Columbia University, Frederick Byrne summarizes the various modes of bibliographical instruction available to Columbia undergraduates since 1974, the year in which such instruction was introduced in response to the difficulties of the undergraduate expected to navigate his way through a complex library system of over six million volumes. Byrne describes in greatest detail freshman instruction, the most effective of Columbia's programs to date. It is conducted as part of the one-term course in Freshman composition, required of all the institution's freshmen. Students in all sections of the course are given a 10-12 page research paper on any topic. A librarian then meets twice with the class to prepare it for library research. The first session, held in a classroom or a seminar room of Butler Library, provides a general description of the library system and instruction in the use of the catalog and periodical indexes. The second session focuses on the student's specific topics. The librarian, after researching each topic, comes to class with suggested topic headings and examples of relevant subject bibliographies and indexes to show and describe to the class. In recent years, a new method of presentation has been developed for the second session. Instead of meeting in a classroom, the librarian (and composition instructor) assembles the class at the card catalog and distributes library exercise sheets to the students. Using his or her topic, the student then must find a relevant subject heading, identify a book with location and call number and find a citation in an index together with call number and location of the periodical. This method has worked particularly well for it: 1 - gets the students started on the actual researching of their paper topics, 2 - permits the librarian to deal with problems as they arise and 3 - forces the student to "learn by doing" instead of by merely passively observing. When the exercises are completed, the librarian checks them over and writes comments or suggestions as needed. Although no formal evaluation has been done, 100% participation by instructors who are free to either arrange the sessions with the librarians or to ignore them, attests to the program's effectiveness and means that over 80 sections and 1200 students were reached. Librarian participation is voluntary and includes catalogers, administrators, and departmental librarians as well as reference staff. Librarians are given leeway in manner of presentation but must follow these imprimaturs: 1 - Avoid overkill by discussing only those tools needed for the freshman paper, 2 - Emphasize use of card catalog, periodical indexes and a few relevant subject bibliographies. Avoid undue complication, 3 - Avoid library jargon.

Radford, Neil A. "Why Bother With Reader Education?" New Zealand Libraries 43:4 (December 1980): 53-56.

Neil A. Radford of the University of Sydney Library expresses some profound doubts over the uncritical acceptance of reader education as a "Good Thing." He contends that most people, except post-graduate students and researchers, do not wish to learn how to use a library and that most of these people are happy and successful without any such mastery of library-use techniques. Moreover, much of the time, effort, and expense put into library instruction would be unnecessary if catalogues and libraries housing them were designed for greater ease of use by their patrons. In addition, Radford considers the need to know how to use a library a rather dubious proposition for the near future. With the rapid advance of automation, people may very well profit more substantially by knowing how to operate a home-oriented or office-based computer terminal.

Radford also believes that the methods of bibliographical instruction are all too often ineffective. The obligatory guided tour during orientation week is universally condemned but almost universally given just the same. In instructional sessions, too much information is crammed into too limited time frames, and not enough effort is made to enlist faculty cooperation to ensure that the instruction offered is pertinent to the course. Finally, attempts to evaluate the success of bibliographical instruction have proven ineffective, particularly in the long-range lasting effects of user education.

In spite of his very serious reservations, Radford believes bibliographical instruction is justifiable and desirable if realistic goals are set, if pedagogical methods are judiciously chosen and implemented, and if target audience needs are carefully defined before any program of education is designed.

Guskin, Alan E., Stoffle, Carla J., and Boissé, Joseph A. "The Academic Library As A Teaching Library: A Role For The 1980's." Library Trends 28 (Fall 1979): 281-296.

In spite of increasing fiscal restraints, the authors see an opportunity for an expanding role for bibliographical instruction and the teaching library (defined as "not only a support service for academic programs, but... actively and directly involved in... teaching, research and community service") during the 1980's. In order to compete effectively with other campus departments and programs, academic libraries must move boldly into the educational mainstream instead of remaining primarily committed to collecting, storing and retrieving information and materials. In the fight for steadily shrinking funds, the academic library has several advantages: 1 - Unlike academic departments whose highly tenured faculty may emphasize traditional approaches, the teaching library is flexible enough to adjust to the changing educational demands made on universities. 2 - The teaching library can mount a strong argument for teaching library skills to a student population entering college or university with decreasing basic skills. 3 - Senior administrators have to maintain a university-wide perspective in the struggle between competing factions and this perspective can be effectively used by librarians in showing how bibliographical instruction serves the educational interests of the entire university rather than one small part of it. However, to insure acceptance and continued support of library instruction programs, librarians must work harder at enlisting the cooperation of faculty members without whose support relevant instruction programs cannot be prepared. Such co-operation can be gained through individual interviews with faculty members, through informing faculty about library services, programs, new collection items, and through contributing to faculty newsletters. They must also examine institutional goals, objectives, curriculum, and long-range plans to identify needs and then identify segments of the campus population who need to be served, such as undergraduates, graduate students, faculty, etc. And they must do still more than this. They must reach beyond the campus community and draw local governmental officials and community businessmen into the seine of bibliographical instruction.

Werking, Richard, Hume. "Evaluating Bibliographic Education: A Review and Critique." Library Trends 9 (Summer 1980): 153-168.

Werking points out the growing concern in bibliographic instruction in recent years with testing and evaluation. He primarily examines the reasons for evaluation, the tools and instruments of evaluation currently in use and the hazards and shortcomings of these instruments.

Instruction programs are evaluated to improve the instruction program, "to justify the program to oneself" or to justify the program to other campus elements such as faculty, college administration or library administration.

Commonly used assessment tools include written objective tests intended to measure mastery of the content of bibliographic instruction, questionnaires and interviews to determine student and faculty attitudes towards instruction, and examination of the end products of instruction, such as term-paper references and bibliographies, and tests to compare the effectiveness of one method of instruction against another (e.g. programmed instruction versus non-programmed instruction or lecture versus audio).

While evaluation is necessary if bibliographical instruction is to be improved, evaluation is hard. It is time-consuming. It is difficult to control variables such as different assignments and students researching different topics and hence following different search strategies. There is disagreement among librarians over which objectives and over which bibliographic skills need to be transmitted. And the use of objective tests is problematical. To save time these often are administered without the use of adequate control groups or pre-testing. Werking points out that "there is an important difference between... statistical significance and quantification and educational significance". By measuring the most basic levels of instruction, the tests may channel instruction in the direction of oversimplification while ignoring the subtlety and complexity of the teaching and learning process. "Illuminative" evaluation, emerging among instruction librarians in Europe, may offer a counterbalance. In "Illuminative" evaluation, evaluators rely heavily upon "subjective assessment, using chiefly observation and interviews".

Kirkendall, Carolyn A. "Library Use Education: Current Practices and Trends." Library Trends 29 (Summer 1980): 29-37.

From her position as Director of the national LOEX (Library/ Instruction Exchange), academic library, Carolyn Kirkendall assesses some of the current practices and trends in library instruction. Conducted tours and general library orientation programs are on the decline. Bibliographies and simple lists of sources are likewise declining. On the other hand, instructional librarians are concerning themselves increasingly with firm guidelines and instructional objectives and with input from the academic community. Interest in computer-assisted instruction is also on the rise. Credit courses in library skills are multiplying. Self-paced and programmed workbook exercises are being widely employed. Audiovisual tools at the point of use, and pretesting to assess and measure the skills (or lack of them) of library users are also currently popular. And subject-related library instruction seems to be replacing general freshman-level orientation which is often too much too soon and far too scatter-gun in approach for maximum effectiveness.

Kirkendall concludes by stressing the following areas in current need of attention and concern: 1 - needs assessment to avoid repetitive, superficial, and cliché-ridden instruction, 2 - a more standardized instrument for measuring library use competence, 3 - the more assiduous collecting and recording of statistics as a means of recording and judging the degree of impact and usefulness of instructional activities, 4 - the avoidance of the all-too-common burnout that instructional librarians are prey to, and 5 - the better preparation and training of library school students for the library orientation/instruction positions available in today's job market.

Gwinn, Nancy E. "Academic Libraries and Undergraduate Education: The CLR Experience". College and Research Libraries 41 (January 1980): 5-16.

Gwinn, program officer for the Council on Library Resources (CLR) focuses on the lessons learned from the projects funded under the CLR-NEH College Library Program and the CLR Library Enhancement Program during the 1970's and assesses the needs and problem areas in bibliographic instruction for the 1980's.

Among the salient lessons learned were:

1. Even the strongest programs will wax and wane depending on staff energies and faculty turnover.
2. Building faculty relations - getting out of the library and into campus affairs - is the touchstone to gaining support for library instruction programs.
3. Our reach may exceed our grasp. Instead of trying to reach every student on campus, perhaps those most interested or whose needs for research skills are greatest should be targeted.
4. Perhaps more attention should be given to instructing the teaching faculty.

During the 1980's, CLR is planning to address these vexing problems:

1. How to provide services within current budgetary constraints.
2. How to measure performance. Other than the use of pre- and post-testing, little has been done to evaluate how much library instruction is retained by users and how, if at all, it enhances academic performance. Quoting Arthur Young and Exir Brennan, Gwinn points out that "for nearly 50 years, librarians have attempted to document a positive correlation between library use and/or proficiency and academic performance." Nothing statistically significant has emerged. Still, library-use educators should remain undeterred in their commitment to library instruction and should find encouragement in yet another comment by an undergraduate of the University of New Hampshire who said that the library instruction program at that institution "made me see the library as a tool, rather than as a pain in the neck."

LITERATURE OVERVIEW

The preceding essays constitute as representative a sampling of present practices in and future prospects for bibliographical instruction in the academic library as is possible in an area that is so diverse and that experienced such phenomenal growth during the 1970's. In fact, given such diversity, it comes as something of a surprise that the authors share so much common ground. To be sure, there are divergences of opinion, most notably in Pauline Wilson's Cassandra warning that if academic librarians persist in subscribing to the "librarian as teacher" fiction, they will ultimately lose sight of the librarian's central role as a provider of information, not instruction. Yet, most of the writers would seem to be more in accord with John Mark Tucker's scrupulously researched essay which traces the tradition of "librarian as teacher" back over a century and more. And the preceding articles reveal other points of unanimity among the authors.

For instance, most agree that there is no one method of instruction that takes precedence over others. Fjällbrant, while explaining the various modes of library instruction, is scrupulous in pointing out the limitations of each. And Renford, who supports the self-paced workbook as the best way of reaching the greatest number of students in her large university setting where the English Department has no class time available for library instruction, makes no claims for it in all academic situations or environments. Similarly, Peter Olevnik gives a qualified endorsement of point-of-use instruction but concedes that questions remain about its effectiveness due to the lack of adequate evaluation procedures.

In surveying the success and effectiveness of library instruction programs started in the early 1970's from the vantage point of a ten year perspective, the authors share a common ground as well. Gone is much of the naive, overarching idealism of the early 1970's. Michael O'Donnell's humorously dyspeptic article shows the disaster that can ensue at an institution when an instructional program is expanded too rapidly and without the input of all librarians who are expected to participate in it. If the time and energies of the librarians are stretched so thin that the reference desk remains unmanned much of the time, then all the effort put into encouraging students to use the library is overturned in a moment. Phyllis Andrews' article serves as an effective counterpoint to Michael O'Donnell's, underlining the success that a program can have if it builds gradually, if it involves all the librarians participating in the instructional process in policy setting or at the very least in carefully selecting their instruction situations so as to avoid frayed nerves and burnout, and if it adopts a "less is more" philosophy.

Anne Roberts has much to say on this latter point in her perceptive essay. She points out that too much is often attempted in instruction. Why, she asks, should the student be hit over the head with the Modern Language Bibliography when the Index Medicus or simply the card catalog may be more appropriate to her needs? Nancy Gwinn takes Roberts still a step further by suggesting that library instruction programs in the past have often had a reach that exceeded their grasp and that perhaps instead of trying to instruct every student on campus, programs should target those who are most interested or whose needs for research skills are greatest.

In assessing the future of academic library instruction in the 1980's, most of the literature is likewise dry-eyed and pragmatic. Although the Guskin, Stoffle and Boissé article paints a rather rosy and sanguine picture, envisioning academic library instruction going forth to encompass not only all segments of the university population from undergraduates to administrators but the business community and city officials as well (outreach in overdrive), the other authors, in keeping with the fiscal constraints and diminished expectations of our time, are less messianic in their concerns. They see many worms in the apple. For instance, Neil Radford argues cogently for establishing "b.i." programs on firmer philosophical and pragmatic grounds while Gwinn believes that attempts to enlist faculty support for bibliographical instruction have not been wholly successful and that faculty good-will must be worked at harder during the 80's if "b.i." is to survive and prosper. And she shares with Richard Werking a concern with developing appropriate means and methods to evaluate and measure the effect of instruction upon the student. Although some pre-testing and post-testing have been done, often the tests have been administered without benefit of adequate control groups. Moreover, the kind of objective tests that are given have obvious limitations. Are they really measuring the library and bibliographical skills that are desired? In their quantitative bias, do they or can they measure the mastery of complex search strategies or the student's ability to negotiate his way through a complex information system?

The final impression conveyed by these articles is that bibliographical instruction will continue to grow during the 1980's but that its growth will be slower, that there will be a greater emphasis on enlisting faculty

support in the targeting of specific student and faculty needs so as to avoid further overburdening of library staffs already overextended due to hiring freezes and layoffs, and that more earnest efforts will be put into developing reliable methods of program evaluation as academic administrators call for accountability and cost-effectiveness in a period of financial constraints and retrenchment.

OBSERVATIONS

Observation Library - 1

1. Library Setting: The library in upstate New York is part of a state-supported university with an enrollment of about 11,000 students. It houses a collection of about 350,000 volumes, 2,500 periodicals, and it has access to the DIALOG data base. The library has a staff of twenty-five professionals, thirty-two clerical employees, and eighteen student assistants. Twelve of the library professionals are involved in the instructional program (eleven reader service librarians and one librarian from technical services.) Three of the clerks provide typing for the program, and student assistants are available for such tasks as stapling and collating. By utilizing an on-campus copying service, costs are kept down, and thus far the program has been able to offer whatever instructional services it deems useful or necessary without fear of budgetary constraints. Library instruction is offered in several seminar rooms and a spacious open area on the second floor with long desks that allow for the passing around of large reference tomes for student perusal. An organized library instruction program has been in existence since 1975.

2. Instructional Services

a. Course-related instruction: 4,000 to 5,000 of the 11,000 students per year are reached through this means. Since the mandatory freshman English course focuses on developing basic reading and writing skills and does not require the writing of a research paper, most of the instruction is in subject bibliography in

advanced, upper division and graduate level courses although instruction is offered to freshmen upon the request of the instructor and is even provided to classes of academically gifted high-school students who desire to use a library with greater resources than a secondary school can offer. The greatest demand for instruction seems to be in law-related courses such as The Consumer and the Law and in journalism courses. This instruction generally occupies two or three class sessions. The librarians are free to choose their own methods of instruction. Some lecture, some use transparencies or slide-tape presentations, and still others use a combination of these approaches. Librarians instructing for the first time are encouraged to sit in on colleagues' sessions but are not forced to do so, and most of them have had prior teaching experience.

- b. Separate Course: Two or three years ago, the librarian in charge of the instruction program initiated a one credit elective which is open to freshmen through seniors. The course, which is being team-taught for the first time this year, introduces the students to the basic reference tools and sources through practice exercises and a term project. The course has not been an unqualified success. Students complain about the excessive amount of work demanded of them for one credit and because the class makeup is amorphous in nature, it is difficult to determine where, at precisely what level, to pitch the course. Moreover, the course only reaches forty students a year and, therefore, takes staff time and energies

away from course-related instruction that could draw more students into the instructional net. This may be another case of more being less.

- c. Evaluation: no formal evaluation in the form of questionnaires or written objective tests is done, but faculty members are urged to have a follow-up consultation with the instructional librarian after the instruction sessions to insure that the instruction is calibrated to the needs of the course. In the past, questionnaires and surveys were used to elicit student responses to the instruction. Ninety per cent of the students responded favorably, but the answers to the questionnaires were often so broad and vague or so patently and conventionally polite that they were abandoned. However, many students do come back later to tell the librarians how much they learned from the instructional sessions.
- d. Outreach: Very little is done in a formal or organized way with faculty outreach although, at the beginning of the fall semester, letters are sent out to faculty members informing them of the instructional services offered by the library. The head of "b.i." cited the main factors militating against a more determined outreach effort as being: 1 - steady growth of the instruction program without such an undertaking (students instructed this year were about 5,000, up from a 4,000 figure for the 1980-81 academic year). Therefore, a kind of campus jungle telegraph seems to be getting the word out about the merits of the program, 2 - a reluctance to overextend the resources of library and staff through taking on too much too fast.

- e. Personal Impressions and Observations: I was strongly and favorably impressed by this institution's instructional program.

Although the observation was made over the school's spring break so that I could not witness an actual instruction session, this drawback was counterbalanced by the time the library staff, temporarily freed from the exigencies of their in-session schedules, could grant me to guide me around and answer my queries. Expecting a half-hour of observation, I was given two and a half hours instead, plus the opportunity to talk with four members of the instructional program. Obviously, they all knew that I was there to evaluate their program and they may have been guilty of gilding the lily at times. Overall, however, I thought they were candid and open in their responses and forthright in acknowledging areas of weakness in their program. Those librarians I spoke with were young and enthusiastic about what they were doing and found that instruction honed their skills as reference librarians since, in preparing presentations, they were often forced to consult reference sources and special subject bibliographies that they had not previously used or had forgotten about. Their single greatest frustration was the personal physical and psychic drain during the peak instructional periods of September through October and January through February. Their greatest satisfaction was the voluntary return of a student to the library after an instruction session was over.

Observation Library - 2

1. Library Description: The library, in upstate New York, is part of a private university with an enrollment of about 3,000 students. It houses a collection of approximately 220,000 volumes and 1400 periodicals. As with Library - 1, the head of bibliographical instruction could not specify how much of the operating budget goes into library instruction per se. The library has a staff of eight professionals, eleven clerks, and sixteen student assistants. The head of bibliographical instruction and one other reference librarian do all the library instruction, and the clerks or student assistants are usually available for typing, mimeographing, and other such chores. The library is a member of LOEX (Library Orientation-Instruction Exchange), and its instruction program as presently constituted has been in existence since the mid-1970's.
2. Instructional Services:
 - a. Course-related instruction: Instruction is targeted primarily at entering Freshmen and is done in the Fall for all thirty-five sections of entering Freshmen (approximately twenty-five students per section). The instruction is basically an orientation to the building and to basic reference tools. After a single 50 minute session held around the card catalog in the reference area of the library, students are given a short answer reference quiz to complete. There is no follow-up instruction session in the Spring when students are required to write the traditional freshman research paper. Such instruction existed in the past, but English

instructors now handle all this instruction by themselves. The two reference librarians involved in bibliographic instruction are presently revising the quiz for the Fall session of 1982. In addition to the Freshman orientation session, the librarians offer subject bibliography lectures in such areas as education, sociology, and philosophy when a faculty member requests them to do so.

- b. Separate course: None.
- c. Evaluation: As with library-1, little in the way of formal evaluation exists aside from the freshman orientation quiz. Student verbal response has evidently been good.
- d. Outreach: Very little is done in the way of outreach. Again dependence is placed upon favorable faculty and student response reaching the ears of other faculty members, and the smallness of the institution makes this a stronger likelihood than in a larger institution. And again, with only two librarians engaged in instruction, there is always the danger of overextension of the program.
- e. Personal impressions and observations: Once more, I was favorably impressed by the enthusiasm and obvious dedication of the supervisor of bibliographical instruction who is one of the two reference librarians doing such instruction and whose prior position was with LOEX. However, I sensed certain shortcomings due mainly to the physical limitations of the library itself. Since the library has some 220,000 volumes and a capacity for storing only 250,000,

the limitations in space make instruction difficult. There is not a conference or seminar room available for instructional purposes. Instruction is given in a central area by the card catalog which means that other students must be driven away from the tables in the area when instruction is in progress. Moreover, instruction in this environment means that transparencies and slide or slide-tape presentations are impossible. This deficiency may be remedied in the near future when an all-purpose room is added on to the library. Still another problem is, that with only two reference librarians delivering the same orientation lecture to some 35 sections in a few telescoped first weeks of the semester, it must be difficult to keep the lecture fresh and to remember whether something you are now saying to a section has already been said to that section or whether it has only been said to the preceding section. As with the first library, the source of greatest satisfaction for the librarian I spoke with was having students comment that they have learned something from an instructional session. Likewise, the greatest dissatisfaction was the physical and psychic drain occurring during the peak periods of instruction early in the Fall semester. The physical constraints of the library building was an additional irritant.

CONCLUSIONS

In comparing my findings in the field with the current literature about library instruction, I find less of a dichotomy between practice and theory than I originally anticipated. To be sure, there are differences. The librarians in the field did not appear to be terribly disturbed, as Werking and Gwinn are, by the lack of evaluative criteria. When I mentioned program evaluation, they feigned concern and suggested that if they could squeeze a free moment into their packed schedules they really ought to do something about that. But their general attitude seemed to be that if the students came back to the library to ask them further questions or simply to dog their footsteps, they must be doing something right. Why muck around with an engine that's purring? Likewise, they felt it would be nice to have some time and money to go to conferences and find out about the state-of-the-art in library instruction, but they harbored some fears that conference papers would be long on educational theory and short on helpful practical suggestions for those working in the trenches.

Yet, the congruence between theory and practice, between the word and the word made flesh, is striking. Such agreement may owe something to the fact that the authors of the literature are themselves actively engaged in library instruction. Whatever the reason, agreement can be noted in many areas. The importance of faculty involvement, which Gwinn stresses is also a major concern of the librarians I met in the field. For instance, librarians at my first observation expressed dismay that many instructors sent students blithely to the library to look up information in a source that wouldn't yield the information if the librarian shook the book all day.

In addition, the lack of close coordination between library instructional staff and faculty as to what was being taught to whom and when often resulted in some students sitting through the same introductory library lecture three times, once in their freshman year, once in their sophomore year, and once again in their junior year. The likelihood of these students surviving their senior year is dim at best.

The librarians I talked with, especially those at library - 1, were also running their instructional program in accord with Phyllis Andrews and Michael O'Donnell's counsel that those programs work best where the instructional load is spread out equitably and where all the librarians have a say as to whether, where, and when they should teach. This keeps librarians from feeling overly harried and/or ignored and keeps them talking to each other as well as to the students. And Anne Roberts' "less is more" theory is also practiced in the field. Library - 2 keeps its freshman orientation lecture within narrow and carefully defined bounds. Acquaint the students with the physical layout of the building, show them the card catalog and a few other basic tools, double-check through a brief quiz to see if they've grasped the basic points, and let them go. Maybe they will come back if you don't drop the whole building on them. Library - 1 follows much the same practice. Their instructional program targets narrow subject areas in fields of the student's greatest interest and immediate needs and gives the student two or three sessions in which to absorb the pertinent information.

Both of the institutions I observed adhered to the "less is more" philosophy by refusing to "empire build", by refusing to be carried away

by Guskin, Stoffle and Boissé's galloping expansionism. While library - 1 offered instruction to a small segment of high school students outside the university community, it did so originally because these students and their teachers came to the library first. They were not solicited. But since they were there the library thought it might as well show them how to use its facilities. However, neither of the libraries wants to get caught in that vicious circle or infinite loop of teaching students what good information retrieval is about only to have these same students find their instruction librarian on the reference desk the next day too exhausted to begin to cope with even a simple directional question.

And finally there is the point of diversity. Nancy Fjällbrant and Beverly Renford emphasize that there is no one method of instruction that is fail-proof or that will meet the needs of every student in every context or environment. Library - 1 uses a variety of methods of instruction, encouraging their twelve instructors to employ whatever method or combination of methods each feels most comfortable with. Library - 2 is more limited, using the straight lecture approach for the most part, but this is essentially a matter of limitations in staffing and in the physical plant rather than a matter of educational philosophy. In fact, the very differences in instructional approach of my two libraries underline the fundamentally pragmatic philosophy that the current literature in library instruction is espousing. You look at the academic environment you are in, locate the needs of your clientele in the best way you can, and then you try to meet those needs. Until that day when someone comes up with a single, provable theory of how all people everywhere learn, the best you can do is the thing that seems to be working for you.